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ASSYRIAN GOVERNMENT OF DEPENDENCIES

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The labor member of the Belgian ministry, M. van der Velde, has drawn a parallel between the Assyrian methods of deportation and those practiced by the Germans. An orientalist has developed this theme with chapter and verse citation. Whatever our sympathies in this present world catastrophe and however close we find the analogy, the episode has undoubtedly excited a certain amount of curiosity as to the methods used by the Assyrians in the government of their dependencies. To the more scientific student there must be great interest in a system which furnished the model to the Persians, to the Hellenistic rulers, to the Romans, and so to the modern systems of provincial government.

As in so many other phases of their civilization, the Assyrians built upon Babylonian foundations, and, as in so many other cases, the Assyrians profoundly modified what they took over. In truth, the Babylonian foundation was comparatively slight. At the beginning of Babylonian history we have the completely independent city state. As one conquered the other, there was no attempt at incorporation, and the patesi, who as vice regent of god on earth ruled the dependent state, was permitted complete autonomy, subject only to the payment of a small tribute and to certain acts which acknowledged foreign suzerainty. After a time, some of these miniature empires developed a recognized unity, indicated by the use of a definite title, but these titles were still connected rather with the city which formed the capital than with the empire as such. With the coming of the Semite and the foundation of the Sargonid power, some twenty-five centuries before the time of Christ, these patesis tended to sink into the position of mere governors, and the process seems

complete under the kings of Ur. When Assyria first came into contact with Babylonia, then under the West Semites who formed the so-called First Babylonian Dynasty (2225-1916 B.C.), we find the process still incomplete. For example, the city state of Kish, within sight of Babylon itself, long remained under the control of a ruler who was actually permitted the title of king, whereas certain of the states farther away were at once incorporated. Which of the two systems should be followed seems to have depended on whether the city conquered had been earlier the capital of a state with imperial pretensions. Even under Hammurapi, we have subject kings who might claim for themselves conquests otherwise assigned to their suzerain. The Sin idinnam, to whom the official correspondence of Hammurapi is addressed, was not a governor, rather he was the viceroy of the entire south of Babylonia, where were the most ancient and famous cities and where also was the greatest need and greatest opportunity for an army.

The breakdown of the Hammurapi empire under his son Samsu iluna put an end to this development. When Babylonia once more was powerful, her new rulers, the Kashshites had brought from their isolated mountain valleys a feudal system which was the very negation of imperial organization. Worthy as would be the study of this feudal regime in the light of similar developments in Mediaeval Europe and in Japan, it is of merely negative importance in an investigation of the provincial organization. Had the system of Hammurapi developed to its natural limit, Shamshi Adad, patesi of the city state of Ashur, would have been supplanted by a governor of the city Ashur. The feudal anarchy for which the Kashshites were responsible gave opportunity for the patesi of Ashur to become the king of Assyria.¹

The Assyrian kingdom thus began its growth when there was little to be learned from its former mistress. Scanty as are our sources for this earlier period, one thing at least stands out clearly: Assyria still lacked a definite imperial organization. Her first advances to the northeast, in the region of the later

¹ The above sketch of the political development of Babylonia is based on detailed studies to appear in the *American Journal of Semitic Languages*.

Assyrian triangle, resulted in complete incorporation into the kingdom and these conquests were later considered home land. Farther advance, however, brought a series of problems. On the south was Babylonia, whose higher culture, the basis of so much of Assyria's own, demanded a peculiar consideration. To the north and east ran lines of mountains, cut up into narrow valleys, each filled with a hardy hill folk; while to the west Aramaeans swarmed across the uncultivated steppe from their homes in the Arabian desert. It was clear that a new system was imperatively demanded.

What was the system first developed is made very evident in the Annals of Tiglath Pileser I (1100 B.C.),² where that monarch calls himself "King of the four world regions, king of all princes, lord of lords, mighty one, king of kings, who hath ruled the peoples . . . who hath been proclaimed over princes." It is clear that we are still dealing with an empire of the crudest type, with no internal bond of union other than a common master of the various subject kings. We do indeed find a statement that "unto Assyria I added land, unto her people peoples," we even find that the land of Qummuh "to the boundary of my land I added," but that here we have no real incorporation is shown by the well-known later history of that region.³

The religious character of the empire is well brought out in the very beginning of the document where we are informed that "Ashur and the great gods . . . commanded that I should extend the boundary of their land." The tax and tribute was that of "Ashur my lord." When the "heavy yoke of the king's lordship" was placed on newly conquered peoples, it was in reality to the "lord Ashur" that they were made subject. Enemies were "not submissive to Ashur my lord," and the conquered were "numbered with those subject before Ashur my lord." Complete subjugation of a land is indicated by the captivity of the conquered gods in the city of Ashur. When kings

² An excellent translation in Budge-King, *Annals of the Kings of Assyria*, 27ff.

³ *Annals*, I. 29ff. cf. Ashur nasir apal, *Ann.* I. 18ff with same formulae; I. 59ff; III. 30f.

were set free, "the oath of the great gods for servanthood for ever" they were forced to swear, and a captive king on whom Tiglath Pileser had mercy was sent home as a "worshipper of the great gods." Thus we see clearly the theocratic character of the empire, with special emphasis on Ashur, the deified city state. There is one case where we seem to have deportation: "I carried off, as men of my land I numbered them;" but ordinarily those who came out on his advance and "embraced the feet" of the king were forced merely to give hostages, furnish an indemnity, and promise a regular yearly tax, to be paid in the city of Ashur in the presence of the king. It is in this yearly tribute, sharply to be distinguished from the extraordinary contribution with which the king must be greeted when he appeared in subject territory on his annual expeditions, that we see the first hint of an efficient imperial control. Through personal knowledge of the high state of military preparedness and through the impression the glitter of wealth must make, the client princes could be made to feel that revolt would be suicidal.⁴

The reign of Tiglath Pileser was followed by a long period of decline. When once more we have full sources, in the reign of Ashur nasir apal (885-860, B.C.), conditions seem at first sight much the same, and yet there is a difference.⁵ To be sure, the official narratives are in large part recitals of war and rapine, of such statements as "I cut off their hands, I burned them with fire, a pile of the living men and of heads over against the city gate I set up, men I impaled on stakes, the city I destroyed and devastated, I turned it into mounds and ruin heaps, the young men and the maidens in the fire I burned." Yet behind this calculated recital of frightfulness, intended to prevent other peoples from following the example of revolt or of resistance, careful inspection finds a new plan of organization. Ashur nasir apal still claimed to be "king of all princes, king of kings," but just before he had told us "In the lands which I have subdued, my governors have I appointed, service, labor, and serfdom have I inflicted upon them," and he boasted of his inflict-

⁴ *Ann.* I. 47f.; 65f.; III. 85f.; IV. 8f.; 32f.; V. 14ff.; I. 87f.

⁵ Inscriptions of Ashur nasir apal in Budge-King, *Annals*, 155ff.

tion of tax and tribute upon them. If the greater emphasis is still laid upon the booty taken in war, upon the indemnity or the forced contribution, none the less we have mention of the yearly tribute as well. For example, by the side of the four manas of silver and the four hundred sheep given as the contribution of the not unimportant Til Abna when the king appeared in person in their territories, we have the yearly tax of ten manas. Once a sort of durbar took place at Carchemish on the Euphrates when the "kings of the lands, all of them, came before me, my feet they embraced, their hostages I took."⁶

But Ashur nasir apal was already reaching out for something more than tribute paying kings. There is a hint that something along this line had been earlier begun in the statement that a certain Shalmaneser had settled Assyrians under a *hazanu*, a sort of mayor, near the sources of the West Tigris, and so far beyond the limits of Assyria proper. Near by was another royal city, perhaps dating from the same time. Why they should take this occasion to revolt against Ashur nasir apal is not clear; perhaps he was too anxious to assert the reality of control by the central power. Somewhat nearer to Assyria was Tushha, whose foundation may be taken as typical of the new Assyrian colonization.

"Tushha anew I took, its old wall I destroyed, the site I cleared. . . . A new wall . . . I built. . . . A palace for the dwelling of my royalty in its gates I erected. . . . An image of white limestone I made, my glory, my great power, and my deeds of valor . . . on it I wrote, in Tushha I set it up. A memorial stone I inscribed, in its wall I placed. The ruined Assyrians, who for want and hunger . . . to the land of Shupre had gone, I brought back, in Tushha I settled them. That city for my own I took, grain and chopped straw of the land of Nirbe in its midst I heaped up. The remnant of the men of Nirbe, who before my weapons had fled, came down and seized my feet. Their habitable houses and cities I settled, tax and tribute in horses, etc., more than before I increased, upon them I placed, their sons as hostages I took."

⁶ Ann. II. 107ff.; III. 125ff.; III. 63ff.

That Nirbe revolted before this very year was over does not ruin the value of this description for purposes of illustration. On one of the royal stelae which Ashur nasir apal set up in this city occurs this significant passage "Ashur nasir apal . . . whose heart desires to make broad his protection." Characteristic of these settlements is the new Assyrian name, such as "Wall of Ashur." Particularly worthy of note is the foundation of two cities to command the narrows of the Middle Euphrates, to which were given the significant names of "Fort of Ashur nasir apal" and "Watch of Ashur." Another of these foundations is in Media where he "placed all the land under one control," though the very next year that country "discontinued tax and tribute due to Ashur my lord." In still another case, we have the refoundation of an old Babylonian outpost against the Median peoples.⁷

All these seem to have been colonies of a more or less military character, established in the midst of hostile peoples. It was not until the very end of the reign that we have an indication of something more. The term *shaknu* is regularly used in later times as the technical word for governor of a province. Literally, it means "one appointed, established." In early times, it means only deputy or vice gerent; for example, Adad nirari I calls his father Arik den ilu the *shaknu* of the god Bel, vice gerent of the god on earth.⁸ There are two passages in the documents of Ashur nasir apal which clearly show another and a transitional usage. In one, we have the statement "In the times of the kings my fathers, no *shaknu* of the land of Suhi had come;" and the scribe then goes on to tell how the present *shaknu* did place himself in a tributary position. The other is in the case of Suru where the nobles had killed the *shaknu* and had called in the "son of a nobody" from another state. When the city had been taken and plundered, the "*shaknu* of my appointing" was again only a client prince.⁹

In the last expedition of the reign, in 867, there is a most sig-

⁷ *Ann.* I. 102f.; II. 3ff.; III. 24ff.; II. 84ff.; III. 50; II. 84f.

⁸ Adad nirari, I. 14; cf. Budge-King, *Annals*, 5.

⁹ *Ann.* I. 100; 75ff.

nificant passage: "All the land of Kirhi feared, my feet they embraced, their hostages I took, my own *shaknu* over them I placed." The emphasis on "my own" and the fact that no client prince is mentioned is conclusive, for provincial governors are but rarely mentioned in the official records, whereas the client princes are. That the later provincial system in very truth began with Ashur nasir apal is made still more clear by the fact that the Assyrian Chronicle, with its list of provincial governors, begins with the reign of his successor Shalmaneser III (860-825 B.C.).¹⁰

Of this successor, his own records afford but little that is new.¹¹ We hear of the same savage cruelties, the same booty-seeking raids, the erection of stelae, and the foundation of cities, now specifically called "royal." One change is noteworthy. The early kings of Agade and of Ur in Babylonia had taken for themselves the title of "God." After a revolt in North Syria, Shalmaneser says that he placed over them a new king and then adds that his royal image was set up in a temple in the capital. The official cult of Ashur and the king, a prototype of Rome and Augustus, is not far distant.¹²

Perhaps the most interesting passage in his official records is that in which he gives a regular tribute list. Previously, we have more or less exact accounts of the booty collected in the course of a raid and sometimes a general statement as to the infliction of a regular tribute. Here for the first time we are given formal statistics. If the numbers can be relied upon, there is the greatest disproportion between the indemnity, or the contribution paid when the king appeared in person, and the yearly tribute which must be handed over in the capital at Ashur. The indemnity often gives huge amounts of copper, iron, clothes, which are never included in the yearly tribute. In Patina, for example, the yearly tribute in precious metals was

¹⁰ *Ann.* III. 103f. Latest edition of the Assyrian Chronicle, Olmstead, *Journal of American Oriental Society*, XXXIV. 344ff.

¹¹ Latest available translation, though not up to date, Schrader, *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, I. 128ff.

¹² *Monolith*, II. 33ff.; *Obelisk*, 154ff.

less than one per cent of the indemnity. The latter may indeed well have been exaggerated, but even at that the yearly tribute was not high. Qummuh, a somewhat barbarous region, paid but twenty manas of silver, plus some purple and cedar beams. Agusi, commanding the routes to the sea from both Assyria and Babylonia, could probably well afford to pay the mana of gold and the six talents of silver, together with flocks and herds. The precious metals must have been fairly common in this region, thanks to the fact that it was not far from several famous silver mines. As the indemnity was so much higher, it paid to furnish a yearly tribute.¹³

More interesting information for the period is found in the Assyrian Chronicle, a chronological table in three columns, of which the first gives the official from whom the year took its name; the second, his office or the province over which he ruled; the third, the most important event of the year. In the reign of Shalmaneser III, no regular cursus of the provincial officers was developed, still another proof of the newness of the system, but by that of his successor Shamshi Adad, there was a regular order of succession, showing the regular rank of the various provinces, for individual promotions were regularly to the higher provinces of the list.

Examination of this list gives interesting results. The oldest capital, Ashur, does not appear, and the same is true of Harran, which apparently held a similar position in Mesopotamia. Of the two provinces in Assyria proper, Kalhu and Nineveh, the former never leads and the latter is actually near the bottom of the list. Why they should be surpassed in rank by such provinces as Nasibina in North Mesopotamia or by Rasappa in the Syrian desert is inexplicable, unless we assume that they were marches out on the frontier and for this reason demanding an unusual responsibility and permitting a freedom of action which could be given in safety only to men long in the service of their sovereign.

After reading the long list of conquests claimed by Ashur nasir apal and Shalmaneser, it is a distinct shock to discover that

¹³ *Monolith*, II. 21ff.

only a small part was actually incorporated within the empire. Under Shalmaneser, we have three provinces in Assyria proper, another on the Babylonian boundary, one to the west, and four along the line of mountains to the north east. Of these last, two can be definitely proved to be later than his accession and the two others are certainly not earlier. At the utmost, we have but five or seven actual provinces at the accession of Shalmaneser in 860.

The Chronicle shows us, what we should never have otherwise suspected, that the reign of Adad nirari (812-783 B.C.) was the great period of provincial organization. In his days no less than eleven new provinces were added. Some of these were actually hostile during the early part of his reign; one, Arba ilu or Arbela, seems to have been due to the splitting up of an earlier province. At this time, too, we have the first province west of the Euphrates. The fact that so many of these new provinces occur in the list of cities which revolted at the end of the reign of Shalmaneser III, would indicate that advantage had been taken of their revolt to reduce them to a provincial form of government.

For the remainder of the dynasty, we have no data, but there is no reason to assume any change during its decline. When Tiglath Pileser IV once more furnishes us with official records (745-728 B.C.),¹⁴ much the same policy is still followed. He was, of all rulers, the most explicit in his description of his provincial organization. This has given him in the pages of previous writers a credit he scarcely deserves and he has even been called the founder of the provincial system. It is quite possible that had we the lost annals of Adad nirari, we should find similar language there; it is more probable that in the records of Tiglath Pileser we have simply a fuller expression of existing facts, in other words, of a more fully developed political consciousness. We still have the raids for plunder with the consequent indemnity; and we have cases, Israel for instance, where frontier kings are again set up after a revolt. But it is clear

¹⁴ Inscriptions best collected by Rost, *Tiglat-Pileser*; cf. Anspacher, *Tiglat-Pileser*.

that the installation of buffer state kings was an unusual procedure, that the tendency was all in the direction of a closer and more organic union with the central power. Tiglath Pileser did not claim, as did earlier rulers, to be a "king of kings," rather he closed his boasts by saying that he "deposed their princes and established his governors." New cities with Assyrian names were founded, captives from various parts of the empire settled therein, and a governor was placed in charge. Once, in dealing with an Aramaean tribe, Tiglath Pileser declares that he "took over the sovereignty of their kings;" a *qepu* over an Arab tribe is nothing but a "resident;" we have newly conquered territory added to a province which had long existed; states were "added to the boundary of Assyria" by the infliction of "tribute like the Assyrians."

Long ago we noted the erection of the royal image in conquered cities and we have other hints as to worship of it as a deity. As early as the time of Shamshi Adad (825-812 B.C.), Ashur was side by side with this image. Tiglath Pileser makes the direct statement that in one of the new capitals a palace was erected, the "might of the god Ashur my lord in it I settled," an image of the king was placed therein, and it was "added to the gods of the land."¹⁵ An obscure verse in the book of Kings¹⁶ even seems to prove that, after his visit to the durbar Tiglath Pileser held at Damascus, Ahaz of Judah erected in the temple at Jerusalem statues of Ashur and of the king of Assyria to be worshipped side by side with the Hebrew God.

Shalmaneser V (728-722 B.C.) took still another step toward the consolidation of the empire. Ashur, the old sacred city, and Harran, the Mesopotamian capital, lost their immunity to taxation and were made as much subject to the various feudal and manorial obligations as were the peasants. Behind this action may lurk some attempt at a grant of more rights to the subject population, at the least it meant a lowering of the position of the old nobility. Nobles and priests united and Sargon took the

¹⁵ *Ann.* 124ff.; 216; Clay Tablet; Slab, *passim*.

¹⁶ II Kings, 16: 18; cf. Olmstead, *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, XX, 567.

place of Shalmaneser. Ashur and Harran remained free.¹⁷ How this freedom worked is shown by a letter written soon after by the governor of Ashur who complained that ever since the king freed the city the feudal service had been rendered useless to him, so that he was not even able to repair the palace.¹⁸

Formal development of the provincial system under the Sargonids we can hardly say there was, though for this period we have far more data than for all that precede. Thanks to the letters, we can reconstruct page after page of the provincial history in the minutest detail. We note the complete abandonment of the cursus of provincial governors as new provinces continue to be added. Business documents even furnish us with the name of a *shakintu* or lady—shall we say governess? It is in this period that we have a definite budget—so many talents from each of the provinces, so many talents for this or that branch of the royal service—and the sums now inflicted are enormous, no less than a hundred talents from Carchemish, thirty from Arpad. In general, it is a period when the principles previously laid down are worked out in ever greater detail. Of growth in system there is no indication. Many of the details of provincial government are worthy of closer study; but they at once lead into a study of the revenue system and the land system, and we are not as yet ready to discuss with hope of accuracy the financial organization of the empire.

With the Sargonid period, a new problem comes more and more to the fore: the exceedingly puzzling question as to what to do with Babylonia. In earlier days, Assyria had been the vassal of that country and the respect thus engendered was never lost. For long centuries, Babylonia alone was treated as an equal with which binding treaties could be made. Intervention there was, to be sure, but in the end Babylonia was always left under a king, who was at least in name independent. But Babylonia became ever weaker, and intervention to save the civilized classes from conquest by semi savage Aramaean tribes

¹⁷ See the highly important but difficult document, Winckler, *Altorientalische Forschungen* I. 403ff.; cf. Olmstead, *Sargon* 31f.

¹⁸ Johns, *Assyrian Deeds and Documents*, II. 174.

became more and more necessary. The Assyrians might wish to pose as the defenders of culture; there was a real menace to Assyria in the possibility of one of these half savage conquerors developing as a military genius equal to the Assyrian king.

With the capture of the last petty "King of Babylon" in 730, Tiglath Pileser was face to face with the problem. There was no legal ruler in Babylonia and no one who would be favored by the higher classes. Certainly, no one could accept as of right divine half barbarous chiefs of the various Aramaean tribes, even if revolutions had not recurred so frequently that it was absurd to say that the succession was in any one family or tribe. If Tiglath Pileser was a foreigner in Babylonia and a usurper at home, at any rate he represented a high degree of culture, he had a reverence for the older Babylonian history which could not as yet be expected from the Aramaeans, and he stood for law and order. Assyrian peace might mean stringent military rule and high taxes; but anything was better than the anarchy which Babylonia had suffered for generations. The native Babylonians had long since forgotten the arts of war and thought only of trade. Had history been made by their sentiments, we could find no stronger instance in history of economic influence. Babylonian merchants, landlords, or priests might prefer Assyrian peace at a price rather than Aramaean anarchy, but they rarely had the choice. If Assyrian kings were strong and wise, Babylonia was Assyrian. Otherwise, Babylonia was controlled and plundered by the wandering tribesmen.

So then, if Babylonia were not to become an international menace, it must be policed from Assyria; and Assyria was nothing loath. There is no need to talk of Assyrian merchants, Assyrians never became a nation of shopkeepers. If lust of conquest or desire of booty was not enough, the need of policing was sufficient to lead an Assyrian king into Babylonia. We should expect, then, that the Assyrians, with their hard common sense in political matters, would have reduced Babylonia to the form of a province as they did in the other captured states. The first objection might be found in the unity of Babylonia, but a moment's thought will show that there was little more unity

there than in Greece. As the Romans did not hesitate to incorporate in their provinces many a Greek city, so parts of the greater Babylonia, on the north and east, were made a part of the provincial system. At this late date, there was no king of Babylonia, though there was still a king of Babylon. The conqueror might adorn himself with a large number of titles, each of which represented the control of some city state of hoary antiquity whose local pride still clung to the last shreds of its former greatness. Nay more, Babylonia had already been long dismembered, for many a predecessor of Tiglath Pileser had borne the title of "king of the four world regions," which was localized at Kutu, barely a day's distance from Babylon. The taking of a Babylonian title, then, was no new practice.

It was something different with the title "King of Babylon." Thanks to the fact that Babylon had been the last capital of a united Babylonia, such a title carried with it a claim to rule over all the land. During the period of Babylon's hegemony, her city god Marduk had taken over most of the prerogatives of the older Enlil of Nippur, and the ancient literature had been systematically revised in his honor. Thus Babylon became the heir of all the glories of the older civilization in the eyes of her northern neighbors. The title, "King of Babylon," could be made of use in imposing upon subject peoples.

Only one objection stood in the way, but it was serious. According to the priests of Babylon, no one could rightfully be king unless he seized the hands of Marduk, not merely on the first New Year's day after his accession, but on each and every day, in token of his feudal homage. The practical Assyrian might realize how unwise was this insistence on ceremony when the king's presence was needed at the head of the army. The unwarlike but fanatical inhabitants of the city thought only that the king's absence would cheat them of the greatest show of the year. In spite of all these disadvantages, Tiglath Pileser determined to keep this prestige in his own hands and became "King of Babylon." In this he was followed by his son Shalmaneser and by the usurper Sargon.

The Babylonian question dominates the whole reign of Senna-

cherib (705–680 B.C.). First Babylonia was ruled by a brother, then a native Chaldaean was placed on the throne, finally the crown prince was given the kingship. Revolt followed revolt and at length the crown prince was treacherously made captive and carried off to Elam. After superhuman effort, Babylon was captured. The patience of Sennacherib was exhausted. Conciliation and firm rule alike had been futile. Nearly the whole of the reign and much treasure which could ill be spared from an empire already bled to the limit of safety had been wasted in the vain attempt to conciliate the fanatical patriotism of its citizens. The city was utterly destroyed.

We need not deny the cruelty with which Babylon was wiped out, neither should we forget that she suffered the same punishment she had so often inflicted upon others. She had been treated with an indulgence without parallel in the history of the ancient orient. She had returned these favors with the worst ingratitude. Even Assyrians who worshipped Babylonian culture must at last conclude that all good Babylonians were long since dead. Those who are acquainted with the classical history will recognize a prototype of the relations between Greece and Rome. To the majority of the Greeks, the liberation proclaimed by Flamininus meant simply the opportunity to irritate Rome with a series of pinpricks. Rome, too, was patient, for she respected Greek culture. Like Assyria, she finally lost her patience and destroyed a great city, Corinth. Here the parallel ends. With all her inconsistencies in foreign policy, Rome knew too much to restore Corinth. Greece realized that she had a master under whose more or less kindly rule she might slowly decay with an honorable old age. Sennacherib had a sentimental son who undid his father's work and rebuilt Babylon. It was only human nature that the Babylonians forgot Esarhaddon but not Sennacherib.

To this colossal blunder, Esarhaddon added another when at his death he divided his empire, giving Assyria to Ashur bani apal and Babylonia to Shamash shum ukin. Neither was of more than mediocre ability, and Shamash shum ukin soon came under the control of the Babylonian patriots. Revolt was

followed by another siege and capture of the city. Again fortune gave opportunity to Assyria, but Babylon was not destroyed. Had Assyria been more mercilessly consistent, the fall of the Assyrian empire and the rise of the Chaldaean under Nabopolassar and his still more famous son Nebuchadnezzar might have been indefinitely postponed.

The Assyrians had developed a splendid imperial organization, the best the world had yet seen. But they had not, save in Sennacherib alone, rulers who had the moral courage to force Babylon to come within the system. Babylon remained an open sore and from this infection of the body politic came destruction so complete that while Babylon is today a household word few indeed realize that at the beginning of the modern provincial system stands the Assyrian government of dependencies.